



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **Public Comment Period on Proposed Rule to Establish a Moratorium on the Issuance of Charter Vessel or Headboat (for-hire) Permits for the Reef Fish Fishery and Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery in Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico**

NOAA Fisheries announces that it has published a proposed rule for Amendment 14 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Fishery of the South Atlantic Region and Amendment 20 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico. Written comments must be received on or before May 9, 2002.

Amendments 14 and 20 would:

establish a 3-year moratorium on the issuance of charter vessel or headboat (for-hire) permits for the reef fish fishery and coastal migratory pelagics fishery in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

restructure the current charter vessel/headboat permit system for coastal migratory pelagic fish to provide separate permits for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.

Under the proposed moratorium, initial eligibility for a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or Gulf reef fish would be limited to the following:

(1) An owner of a vessel that had a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish or coastal migratory pelagic fish, or whose application for such permit had been received by NOAA Fisheries, at some time during the period March 29, 2000, through March 29, 2001, and who has such a valid permit on the effective date of the final rule that would implement the proposed moratorium.

(2) Any person who can provide NOAA Fisheries with documentation verifying that, prior to March 29, 2001, he/she had a charter vessel or headboat under construction and that the associated expenditures were

at least \$5,000 as of that date. If the vessel owner was constructing the vessel, the vessel owner must provide NOAA Fisheries with receipts for the required expenditures. If the vessel was being constructed by someone other than the owner, the owner must provide NOAA Fisheries with a copy of the contract and/or receipts for the required expenditures.

(3) An historical captain, defined for the purposes of this proposed rule as a person who provides NOAA Fisheries with documentation verifying that:

(a) Prior to March 29, 2001, he/she was issued either a United States Coast Guard (USCG) Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel license (commonly referred to as a 6-pack license) or a USCG Masters license and operated, as a captain, a federally permitted charter vessel or headboat in the Gulf reef fish and/or coastal migratory pelagic fisheries that was not permitted in his/her name or the name of a corporation in which he/she was a shareholder.

(b) At least 25 percent of his/her income was derived from charter vessel or headboat fishing in one of the years 1997, 1998, 1999, or 2000.

NOAA Fisheries permit records will be the sole basis for determining eligibility based on permit or application history (i.e., eligibility criterion 1). No more than one owner of a currently permitted vessel will be credited with meeting the permit history criterion based on a vessel's permit history. An owner would not be issued initial charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or Gulf reef fish under the moratorium in excess of the number of federally permitted charter vessels and/or headboats that he/she owned simultaneously at some time during the period March 29, 2000, through March 29, 2001.

Comments on the proposed rule for Amendments 14 and 20 should be sent to Phil Steele, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. Comments may also be sent to Phil Steele via FAX to (727) 570-5583. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet.

Requests for Amendments 14 and 20 should be sent to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619; telephone (813) 228-2815; FAX (813) 225-7015; e-mail: [Gulf.Council@noaa.gov](mailto:Gulf.Council@noaa.gov) or can be viewed at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's website at <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/downloads/CBAmendmentFINAL.PDF>. Requests for the proposed rule should be sent to Phil Steele or can

be viewed at the following web site: <http://frwebgate5.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WaisdocID=7733595988+0+0+0&Waisaction=retrieve>.

To obtain considerable recorded information about our missions, services, and management measures, call our toll free public service line at 1-866-570-5301. If the information you need is not available on that line, you can leave us a message and we'll get back to you within one business day.

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.